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BAPTIST CHURCHES
OF
WOODFORD COUNTY, ILL.

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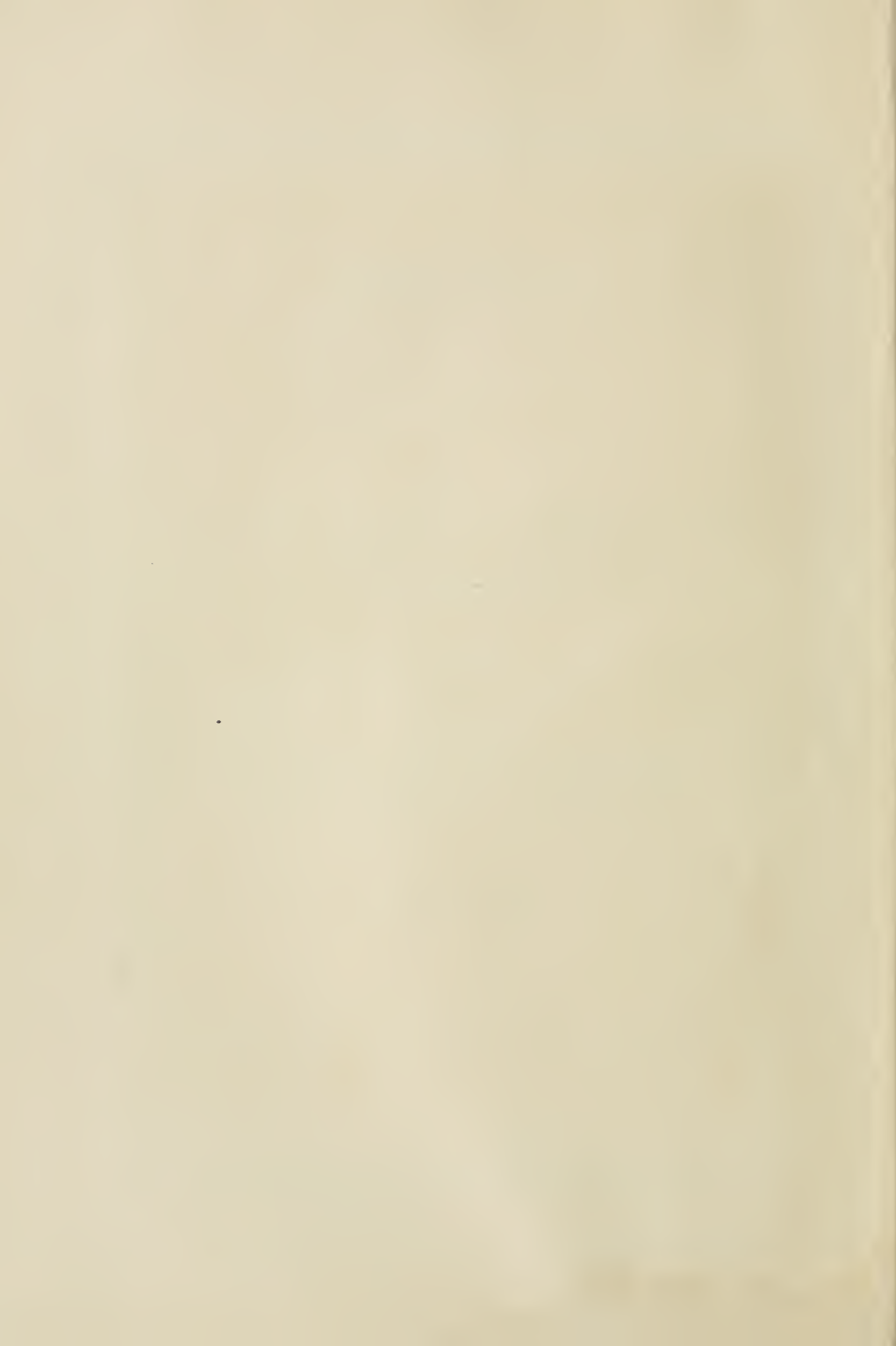
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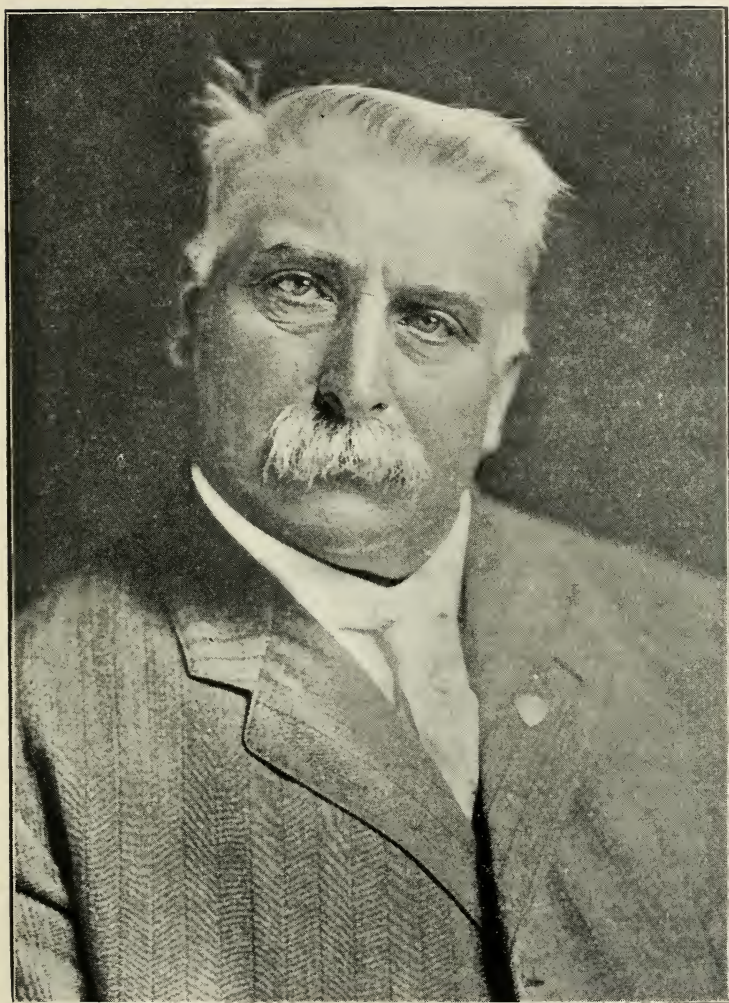
Woodford County, Illinois



By A. F. Marshall, A. B. (Shurtleff College 1879), who has been closely identified with the history of the Baptist Churches of this county for more than fifty years.

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A. F. MARSHALL.

PREFACE.

In presenting this little volume to the public containing, as it does, the history of the Baptist churches of Woodford county, Illinois, I do so but with a single purpose: viz., to so preserve the history of the faithful lives of service of the men and women of the past, who made the splendid work of our churches possible, that present and future generations may profit by the examples of their self-sacrificing devotion. In the preparation of this little volume I have sought to bring out that which I consider is vital in relating the story of the struggles, the hardships, and the victories that have attended the growth of our churches in the county for more than fifty years. Much of this history has come within the range of my personal experience. I wish, however, to here acknowledge my indebtedness to all who have assisted me in gathering the material that supplements my own knowledge of the progress of the church.

The volume goes to you with the prayer that it may fulfill the purpose that inspired the author in its preparation, and that the contemplation of the lives of the godly self-sacrificing men and women of the church of yesterday may serve to inspire the men and women of today and tomorrow to a greater spirit of earnestness and devotion, and that thru faith the history of the church of tomorrow may be replete with victories and achievements for Christ.

Yours truly,

A. F. MARSHALL.

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History of the Baptist Churches of Woodford County, Illinois.

CHAPTER I.

Early Heroes of the Church.

BEFORE compiling a history of the Baptist churches of Woodford county, I wish to mention some of the deacons and preachers, who were in the county more than fifty years ago, whom I personally knew. I wish first to mention the name of Esther Mundell, at whose home the first Baptist church was organized after Woodford county was set off as a county. She had much to do with the first Baptist church, always being liberal in her contributions of both time and money. It is related that before the church was lathed and plastered, a covenant meeting was held on Saturday afternoon. It was cold and they had only one stove. They thought they ought to have another stove before Sunday, and all began to make excuses as to why they could not go and get one. She arose and said, "If no one else will go, I will hitch up my old yellow mare and go to Metamora and get one and have it set up before Sunday morning." And she did. I have often seen her drive the old yellow mare with a colt of the same color by her side.

Deacon Hammers and wife of the Richland church, cast a Christian influence over the county of their time, that was probably greater than that of any other couple since. Deacon Hammers was a man of sterling Christian character, a man loved by all who knew him. I first remember him when I was a little boy in my father's arms. From that time until his death I was never at a service that I did not see Deacon and Mrs.

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Hammers, if they were well. I doubt whether there was a man better known over the county than he was. Mrs. Hammers was a true Christian woman, who always visited the sick in the neighborhood, no matter who they were. It is said that she never went empty handed. I have heard her tell of the Association meeting being held at the Richland church, when they would entertain twenty-five over night, making large beds on the floor for them.

Joseph Hammers, the father of Deacon Hammers, used to live near Panola and he would walk to Richland to attend a covenant meeting, stopping at my parents for dinner and going on after dinner, making a twenty-five mile walk. I remember well when he would stop at our house both ways. I remember the last time he came. It was a cold, chilly day, and the buttons were off his overcoat. I remember that mother sewed some on for him. He took cold and died soon after, I think about eighty years of age.

Another man I wish to mention is Uncle Jeter Foster, as every one called him. While a member of the Methodist church he always helped at the Richland church, especially taking great interest in the Sunday school. No history of anything of the northern part of Woodford county would be complete without a mention of the Kerricks, pioneer M. E. preachers, men of fine Christian character, who did much for every Sunday school of the county. As a little boy I can remember how we loved to see them ride up to the school house in which services were held, for we always knew that they would have something good to say to us children.

Probably no preacher was better known than Rev. C. D. Merrit thruout Central Illinois. Coming here in 1853, he remained in the county about twenty-five years. His sterling Christian character and firm manhood made him a man of more than ordinary ability. He probably did more for the Baptist churches in this county than any other preacher. While pastor of the Washburn and Richland churches, he would often walk

to Richland Saturday afternoon for covenant meeting, stay all night, preach Sunday morning, walk back to Washburn and preach Sunday evening. He probably helped organize more churches, and ordain more young men to the gospel ministry than any other Baptist preacher in Woodford county.

Elder M. L. Fuller was another pioneer Baptist preacher who used to ride over the prairies before there were any roads, preaching for the scattering churches. His grand daughter, Lydia Fuller, was a missionary and died on the foreign field. Deacon E. A. Fisher was another deacon whose influence was felt far and wide.

Dr. G. S. Baily was another early Baptist preacher, one who helped in many ways in the early struggles of the Baptist churches of Woodford county. He was later connected with the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Another pioneer Baptist preacher was Rev. Brown, who used to preach in a log school house near the Hallam farm. Another early Baptist preacher was Charles Fuchs, a Frenchman, who married a cousin of the Majors, and came here from Kentucky. He at one time owned the Haynes farm southwest of Eureka. While he never was ordained, he preached frequently during the fifties.

Another prominent figure in the history of the Baptist church in this county was E. R. Marshall, who came to this county in 1848, and became a charter member of the Roanoke Baptist church at the time of its organization in 1864. He continued a member of that church until it gave up its organization. For a number of years he paid one-fourth of the salary of the pastor of the Roanoke church, and was a staunch supporter of the work in all its branches.

Elder Brooks preached for the Richland church for some months, filling the pulpit every alternate Sunday. He rode thirty miles to reach his preaching appointment, riding the entire distance on horseback.

CHAPTER II.

The Richland Baptist Church.

THIS was the first Baptist church organized in Woodford county after its organization as a county. From this church many other Baptist churches were organized. It was situated five miles north of Metamora. It was organized at the home of Mrs. Esther Mundell, Sept. 27th, 1844, with 13 members. Four from Pennsylvania, one from Virginia, five from Vermont and three from New York. Those present at the organization were Elders H. G. Weston, Thomas Powell and delegates from several other Baptist churches.

Elder Thomas Brown had preached once a month there for some time, and Elder Thomas Powell and Isaac Merriam occasionally. Elder H. G. Weston, while pastor at Washington, had visited and preached there and was instrumental in gathering the church together. Jesse Hammers was its first deacon and held that office until his death, living to a good old age. Tilton Howard was its first clerk.

During the following winter an effort was made to erect a house of worship, in which they were assisted by Deacon Bacheller, of Lynn, Massachusetts, he being an uncle of the pastor. The house was begun in May, 1845. In 1846 Elder Weston removed to Peoria and until the fall of 1847, the church was without a pastor, only having preaching occasionally. Elder W. Pigsley then became pastor and served the church until 1849.

On the thirteenth of October, 1849, a council was called to ordain one of the members to the gospel ministry, August B. Cramb. This is undoubtedly the first ordination of a Baptist minister in Woodford county. Immediately after the ordination, he baptized his wife, who previously had been a member of the Congregational church. In December, 1849, Elder S. S. Freeman, from Michigan, began to preach for the Richland

church. A special religious interest had been manifested under the labors of Elder Pigsley on the river bottom, near the Illinois River, a few miles west of the meeting house. Elder Freeman that winter commenced a revival meeting there and ten were baptized during the meeting, and others afterward. In April 1850 Elder Freeman and several others were dismissed to form a church at Spring Bay. Elder Freeman still continued to preach at Richland part of the time. In June 1850 the Richland church reported 33 baptisms and 61 members. In December 1850 Elder Cramb was dismissed to go into the new church to be formed at Metamora. In June 1851 a council met with the Richland church to ordain John M. Scrogin to the work of the gospel ministry and soon after he became pastor of the Delavan church. During the year 1851 the church reported 8 baptisms and 84 members. During this year the church reported several members dismissed to form another Baptist church. Twenty-nine members residing on Half Moon Prairie, desiring to form a new church asked and received letters of dismissal to form a new organization. In December another colony of nine asked the same privilege to form the Richland Valley church.

During the month of December 1851, Elder Cramb commenced preaching again part of the time. At this time the church was greatly weakened by so many of its members going to other colonies, several of which have become large and flourishing churches, so that in 1852, it only reported three baptisms and 48 members. Part of this time Elder J. W. Stickney preached for Elder Cramb on account of the sickness of the latter. In 1853 the church reported only 23 members.

In February, 1854, Elder C. D. Merrit became pastor of the church, in connection with the Metamora and Half Moon churches. In June following, the church reported six baptisms and 33 members, and in 1855, seven baptisms and 44 members. In March, 1856, the pastor commenced a series of meetings, assisted part of the time by G. S. Baily, D. D., which resulted

in a precious revival and 22 were baptized, making a total membership of 63, C. D. Merrit being pastor, Jesse Hammers deacon and E. A. Fisher clerk. Elder Merrit still continued his labors until April 2nd, 1859, when the church called S. S. Robinson to labor one half time, dividing the time with Washburn. Abner Mundell was church clerk at the time and Jesse Hammers deacon. On July 23rd, 1859, the church voted to divide the Illinois River Baptist Association.

Elder S. S. Robinson served the church as pastor from March 31st, 1860 to February 28th, 1862. On the 21st of May, 1864, he accepted a call to again become its pastor for one half time. On April 29th a call was made to organize a church on the prairie, the same being the Roanoke Baptist church.

Elder Charles Cross served the church as pastor one half time from April 22nd, 1866 to February 6th, 1869. On the same day as the resignation of Elder C. Cross was received, a call was extended to Elder W. Parker to become the pastor and he served the church until April 6th, 1872. Brother F. W. Smith, a student supplied for a while, the church being without a settled pastor, until the last of March 1873. Elder James commenced as pastor at that time. During the summer of 1873, many desiring a new church, it was decided to erect a new building in the village of Cizenovia, where a Sunday school had been organized about the 12th of May, 1873, with A. J. Hammers, a son of Deacon Hammers, as superintendent. The new church having been completed, it was dedicated the first Sunday in January 1874. Elder James continued as pastor until September 29th, 1877. In April 1878 Rev. J. B. Brown served as pastor one half time, and in April 1879 Rev. Wood, a student, began to supply the church and continued six months. On September 4th, 1880, Elder Wilson began to serve the church as pastor. Elder Graham served for a while as pastor and on December 13th, 1883, Elder Coffman became pastor, dividing his time with the Roanoke church. On November 8th, 1885, in connection with the Roanoke church a call was

extended to Elder Gregory to become pastor of both churches, which call he accepted and served until September 25th, 1887, when Brother M. M. Lewis became pastor and on August 4th, 1888, he was called for another year. In October 1889 the church called Brother Booth, a student, who also served the the Roanoke church, remaining as pastor until some time in 1890, when Brother Berry became pastor, and on January 18th, 1891, Rev. Young was called for one year, and at the close of his labor, the church called Rev. C. E. Cady. He began his labors May 17th, 1892. J. F. Sparks commenced his work in October 1893. preaching his farewell sermon November 15th, 1895. The last pastor was H. A. Stonglite in 1900. This closes the history of the first Baptist church in Woodford county.

CHAPTER III.

The Metamora Baptist Church.

THE Metamora Baptist church was organized December 26th, 1850, with 12 members, who were originally from Vermont, New York and New Hampshire. They were as follows: Elder August B. Cramb, Jonathan Sherman, James A. Sherman, Samuel Butterfield, Wm. Fisher, Isabell G. Cramb, Betsy Sherman, Ophelia Sherman, Electa Sherman, Marie Sherman, Mrs. Mary Butterfield, Mrs. Abbie Fisher. Elders H. G. Weston, G. S. Baily and E S Freeman were present at the organization.

The nearest Baptist churches were Richland, five miles north and Washington, seven miles south. Elder Cramb, who had recently been ordained at Richland and preached here some time previous to the organization of a church under the patronage of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, became the first pastor. The church united with the Association in June 1851, having 18 members. Owing to poor health Elder Cramb could not preach all the time and Elder J. M. Stooky preached every alternate Sabbath during the ill health of Elder Cramb.

In the year 1852, arrangements were made to inclose the meeting house. In the spring of 1853 the church enjoyed an interesting revival, the pastor being assisted by Elder G. W. Benton and G. S. Baily. The meeting was held in the Congregational church, where Elder Cramb had been invited to preach every alternate Sabbath. A general awakening took place thru all the community and additions were made to all the churches. At the next meeting of the Association the church reported 31 baptisms and 62 members. In the fall of 1853, owing to the failing health of Elder Cramb, he was compelled to resign; hoping that the climate of the Pacific coast would help him, he accepted an appointment of the Home Mission Society to go to Oregon as a missionary. A little later he was compelled to abandon the idea and in June 1855 he went to St. Cloud, Minn., but his health still failing he visited New York for medical aid in September 1856. He hoped to spend the winter in the south, but being too feeble to stand the trip, he returned to Metamora and died February 19th, 1857, closing his labors as a faithful church minister at thirty years of age. In February 1854 Elder C. D. Merrit became pastor of the church, preaching every alternate Sabbath, and in 1854 the church reported four baptisms and 76 members. During the summer of 1854, the house having been completed, it was dedicated November 22nd, 1854. It was a brick structure costing about \$2000. Toward this building Deacon Jonathan Bacheller, of Lynn, Mass., had contributed \$200. In the spring of 1855 Elder S. A. Estee assisted the pastor in a series of meetings during which three were baptized, the total membership being 81. In the fall of 1855, Elder Merrit being removed to Washburn and the church desiring his services all the time, he resigned as pastor of the Metamora church. G. S. Baily became pastor in December 1855 and in February 1856 Elder Benjamin Thomas assisted the pastor in a series of meetings and eight persons were baptized, making the membership at that time 83. The deacons were James A. Sherman, Joseph K. Stitt and

Matthew Toole; clerk, Edgar Babcock. Elder Berry served the church as pastor for a few years. I am not able to find out how long he was there and the records being lost I can not tell who the last pastors of the church were. The building was conveyed to the German Evangelical Reformed Lutheran on May 10th, 1892, by the following trustees; J. A. McGuire, Matthew Toole and J. E. Stitt.

CHAPTER IV.

The Washburn Baptist Church.

THE Washburn Baptist church was located in Woodford county near the Marshall county line. It was formerly called the Half Moon Prairie church, for the name of the prairie on which Washburn now stands. It was formed from members of the Richland church who lived on the prairie in 1852. It was made up of 28 members, principally from New York, some, however, from Ohio, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Kentucky, while some were natives of Illinois. Elders E. S. Freeman and W. G. Gordon were present at the organization of this church. Elder E. S. Freeman was the first pastor, commencing his labor at Washburn before the organization. He continued to preach one half time for a year, two being baptized during his labor. Elder C. D. Merrit became pastor in March 1853 and the church enjoyed a revival under his labors. Their house of worship was built in the fall of 1854. It was 32x45 feet and cost \$2200. For one year it received aid from the Home Mission Society and was self sustaining afterward. One of the principal founders of the church was Peleg Sweet, a brother of Elder Joel Sweet. He had a family of twelve children, four sons and eight daughters, all members of the church, the husbands of the daughters having all been baptized, and nine of the grand children all on profession of faith, making over thirty in his family belonging to the church. The membership at that time was 75. Pastor,

C. D. Merrit; deacons, E. A. Sweet and Ebenezer Dunham; clerk, Tilton Howard.

About 1859 the church joined the Bloomington Baptist Association. In 1860 Elder G. S. Baily served the church as pastor. Elder W. E. James commenced his labors as pastor in March 1868, and continued until 1873. Rev. A. B. Tolmlinson served as pastor to 1876, and J. B. Brown, following him, closed his labor in April 1878. After him Rev. John Beal served as pastor from October 1878 until March 1879. In April 1881 the church received Rev. J. J. Gorham to act as pastor, he being still in Morgan Park seminary. On July 2nd, 1882, at a meeting held after church, a committee was appointed to arrange for the ordination of Brother J. J. Gorham, it being decided to hold the ordination services on August 29th, 1882. The following churches were invited to sit in council with the Washburn church: Belle Plain, Cazenovia, Chenoa, Clayton, Deer Creek, El Paso, Green Valley, Lacon, Lexington, Metamora, 1st church Peoria, Roanoke, Tonica and Tremont. The council proceeded to organize and to elect officers, choosing C. E. Hewitt, D. D., of Peoria, moderator; Rev. L. C. Morehouse, of El Paso, clerk. Having examined the candidate and finding him ready for ordination, the service was as follows: Sermon, C. E. Hewitt, D. D., of Peoria; ordination prayer, Rev. W. H. Carmicle, of Lexington; hand of fellowship, Rev. A. C. Kelly, of Tremont; charge to candidate, Rev. O. B. Reed, of Lacon; charge to church, Rev. J. B. Brown, of Chenoa; benediction by candidate. The church property was sold February 16th, 1897.

CHAPTER V.

The Panola Baptist Church.

THE first record we have of the Panola Baptist church was on October 22nd, 1856, at which time a regular covenant meeting was held at the Hammers school house. The church secured as pastor for one fourth time Brother W. Branch. He commenced to preach there October 15th, 1856. In the year 1857 the church sent the first letter to the Illinois River Association. On January 25th, 1857, it elected its first deacons, Brothers Robert Evans and John M. Patton being chosen. The first baptism recorded was on November 15th, 1857, administered by Elder G. S. Baily. In December 1857 Thomas Patterson, Joseph M. Patton, Joseph T. Hammers, Samuel Hammers and D. W. Hurt were appointed trustees. At the same meeting a building committee was appointed composed of Thomas Patterson, R. J. Evans and Jacob C. Myers; it was also decided to continue the labors of Brother Branch until April 15th. He remained with the church until May 1st, 1858.

Elder F. Ketchem commenced his labors as pastor on May 5th, 1858. On January 9th, 1858, the railroad offered the church a donation of two lots on which to build a house of worship and the church accepted the same. Owing to the weakness of the church a request was sent to the Home Mission Society for \$200 to help pay Elder F. Ketchem's salary and it was granted July 3rd, 1858. On July 31st, 1858, at a regular covenant meeting it was voted to hold meetings in the Hammers neighborhood, commencing the fourth Sabbath in August, and at the same meeting Thomas Patterson was elected treasurer. On January 1st, 1859, delegates were sent from the Panola Baptist church to organize a Baptist church at the home of James Huxtable, to be known as the Clayton Baptist church. Not having completed their church, services were held in a hall and the church voted to continue the labors of Elder F. Ketchem

another year. June 4th, the church sent as delegates the pastor and Brother Thomas Patterson to Peoria to help recognize a Baptist church there. The church decided to still retain the labors of Elder Ketchem for another year and voted to divide the time with the Pontiac church. At the same meeting Elder Ketchem and Brother J. T. Hammers were appointed as delegates to sit in council to organize the church at Pontiac. Owing to some of the records being lost I could not tell just when Elder F. Ketchem closed his labors and when Elder Stimson began. The records show the resignation of Elder Stimson March 8th, 1862. On August 23rd, 1862, the Panola church called Elder C. Skinner to serve as pastor for six months. In August 1863, the church was without a pastor and no regular covenant meeting had been held for some time. Elder Sampson had preached there part time. The church called as pastor Elder J. Cromwell June 4th, 1864, and on February 4th, 1865, he was retained as pastor for another year. Elder W. Parker, having held a meeting the following winter the church extended him a call for one half time which he accepted. On October 6th, 1866, the Panola Baptist church decided to dedicate their new house of worship, October 28th, 1866 being fixed as time of dedication. The services took place on the day appointed, the following brethren taking part: Rev. A. Goss, F. Ketchem, B. F. Scrivins, G. Kent, S. S. Robinson and Elder Cromwell. Elder Goss preached the dedication sermon from Zachariah 4-6. Elder Ketchem gave a history of the early struggles of the church up to that time. The cost of the church was \$3104. In a series of meetings held by Elder Goss immediately following the dedication, many were converted and joined the church. It seems that the church records are lost from November 17th, 1866, until January 26th, 1867, but Elder William Parker was serving as pastor a part of the time at least. On January 4th, 1868, he was called to serve as pastor the following year. At a meeting held July 3rd, 1868 Brother Skinner resigned as church clerk and Brother J. S. Evans was elected to fill the vacancy. He served until December 5th,

1868, when Cyrus Dix was elected to take his place. Elder W. Parker resigned on January 2nd, 1869, the same to take effect on April 1st, 1869. On March 20th, Elder R. C. Palmer commenced his labors as pastor and continued until January 1st, 1872. March 1st, 1872, the church called Elder G. N. Drurry to become pastor. He accepted the call and continued until August 1882. Those serving the church as pastors from November 16th, 1884 to May 19th, 1889, were Elder A. R. Morgan, Elder G. S. Duff and Brother W. A. Nelson. As the records are incomplete, we are unable to tell how long each served. On June 11th, 1889, the church met in council for the purpose of ordaining Rev. W. A. Nelson to the gospel ministry. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. J. L. Jackson, D. D.; the ordination prayer, Rev. E. C. Cady; hand of fellowship, J. H. Neuman; charge to candidate, A. H. Rhodes; charge to the church, Rev. J. B. Brown; benediction, Rev. W. A. Nelson. Moderator, F. W. Smith; clerk, J. C. Ship. Just how long Rev. W. A. Nelson remained as pastor of the church the records fail to show.

A young people's society was organized May 17th, 1889. A part of the year 1894 Elder J. F. Howard served the church part of the time. On July 1901 a meeting was called for the purpose of disposing of the Panola Baptist church. It was voted to sell the church to the United Evangelical church for the sum of \$450, the same to be turned over to the Baptsit Association and it was decided to turn the records of the church over to the El Paso Baptist church to be preserved by the church clerk.

CHAPTER VI.

The El Paso Baptist Church.



THE El Paso Baptist church was organized January 22nd, 1858, the organization being effected at a meeting held in the old Crawford hall, which at that time stood on the corner just west of where John Engel's residence now stands. For several years services were held at the homes of the various members and in halls

and rooms down town. The charter membes of the El Paso church were: Rev. and Mrs. Branch, Anthony Daffam, Mrs. Sarah Daffam, Lewis McOmber and wife, James Crawford and wife, James T. Hewitt, Mrs. H. M. McOmber, H. H. Hevitt, Miss A. Whittaker, Miss Deborah Whittaker and Irene McOmber.

Rev. Branch served as pastor until 1860, and was followed by Elder S. F. Stimson, who remained until December 1865. It was during his pastorate that the first house of worship was erected. It was torn down during the summer of 1911 to make room for a new church. It was dedicated in December 1864, and it was built during the closing scenes of the war and many difficulties were encountered in its erection as were also in the erection of the M. E. church the same year.

Following Elder S. F. Stimson came A. H. Stowell, who served the church one year, being succeeded by Rev. R. C. Palmer, who served the church one year and improved the farm now owned by W. Strickland. A. B. White came next and served one year, after which J. E. Ingham was in charge two years. J. F. Minian came the next year and in 1873 Rev. S. B. Gilbert became pastor and remained three years. Rev. J. B. Hutton served from November 1878 to January 1882. During the summer of 1882 Rev. L. C. Morehouse was chosen pastor and served for the next two years, when Rev. E. C. Cady came to the charge. During the pastorate of Rev. Cady the old William Jenkins' residence was purchased for a parsonage. Rev. E. C. Cady served as pastor until 1890. After a brief period without a pastor the church called Rev. J. F. Howard, who was chosen in November 1890, serving the church over ten years. On July 1st, 1901, Rev. W. A. Fuller commenced his pastorate and remained until October 1910. For almost two years the church was without a pastor. During the latter part of Rev. Fuller's pastorate he advocated a new church building. In this connection we are able to chronicle the peculiar fact that a magnificent church building has been erected without a

pastor. The building committee consisted of A. C. Jones, W. H. North, I. B. Hammers, Harvey Leonard and Omer North, with L. K. Evans as treasurer, who had full control of all the work. The building contract was let to James A. Reichel. The church and its equipment cost approximately \$18,250, all of which was raised before the dedication, except \$3,300. This latter sum was easily raised with enough additional to make the sum \$4,060. All this sum was raised approximately among the members of the Baptist congregation, except about \$1,000. About two-thirds of the entire sum was subscribed by twelve members of the church as follows: Mrs. Eunice Evans, \$5,500; A. C. Jones, \$1,500; J. W. Ostler, \$1,000; F. L. Jones, \$750; Miss Anna Tipler, \$750; W. H. North, \$600; Charles North, \$600; Omer North, \$600; James North, \$600; Lewis L. North, \$600; Mrs. Will Gibbs, \$500; I. B. Hammers, \$500. Other members gave liberally but we have mentioned only those who gave \$500 or more. Mrs. Eunice Evans, besides her magnificent gift toward the church building, has furnished the ladies' parlor at an estimated cost of \$200. On April 14th, 1912, all the churches in the city united in the dedication services, the following program being given, beginning at 10:45 a. m.:

PROGRAM

Organ prelude. Mable Clarie Jones, of Bloomington.
Anthem, chorus from the various church choirs.
Scripture reading.
Hymn.
Invocation.
Vocal solo, Grace D. Hastings, of Bloomington.
Announcements.
Anthem.
Sermon, Dr. E. P. Brand, of Normal.
Hymn.
Report of building committee.
Dedication prayer.
Dedication hymn.
Benediction.
Postlude, Miss Jones.

7:30 P. M.

Organ prelude, Miss Jones.
 Evening hymn, Miss Barbara Toussing, Miss Bertha Barlow, L. K. Evans and Eddy McOmber.
 Vocal solo, Miss Hastings.
 Anthem, chorus.
 Scripture reading and prayer.
 Anthem and chorus.
 Sermon, Dr. Brand.
 Closing hymn.
 Postlude.

Revs. Klopp, McNemar, Woolley and Cressy, pastors of the other churches of El Paso, were given an opportunity to speak a few words during the evening, and each personally expressed a message of congratulation on behalf of their congregations. Rev. Morehouse also spoke a few words of congratulation to the congregation over which he presided over a generation ago.

On September 1st, 1912, Rev. Frank M. Spooner, of Toledo, Ohio, began his pastorate.

The present officers are as follows: Deacons, W. H. North, J. W. Ostler, A. C. Jones; trustees, James R. North, L. L. North, Frank L. Jones, Charles North, John W. North, L. K. Evans; clerk, J. W. Ostler; treasurer, L. K. Evans.

CHAPTER VII.

The Meridian Baptist Church.

A FEW Baptist members living in the vicinity of the Washington school house, Linn township, Woodford county, had been holding meetings from time to time for some eight months, Elder C. D. Merrit preaching for them every two weeks on Sunday afternoons. Early in the winter there seemed to be unusual interest in the prayer meetings, a deep solemnity under the

preaching of the gospel and the few members resolved to form themselves into a church for which purpose they appointed a meeting on Saturday, January 17th, 1857.

According to appointment a number met, meeting called to order by Elder Merrit who also opened the exercises by prayer, after which the following persons presented their letters from sister churches: S. R. Davison; A. M. Davison, E. R. Nye, D. L. Nye, E. D. Davison, Mary S. Davison, A. L. Davison, Emily J. Davison. At the same time A. C. Atwood was received for baptism. E. R. Nye was chosen clerk. They voted to call the body The Meridian Baptist church and adopted as the expression of their faith The Articles of Faith and Church Covenant adopted by the New Hampshire State Convention and published in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

Sunday, the first day of February, was the usual time for holding preaching service by Elder Merrit after which A. C. Atwood was baptized. The church decided to protract the meeting from evening to evening. The Lord heard their prayer and precious souls were converted.

On February 7th four persons were received for baptism and on the next day they were baptized and received into the church. Also one received by letter.

Saturday, February 14th, seven were received for baptism and four by letter. Eight persons were baptized at the close of the service.

On March 14th, 1857, S. R. Davison and N. L. Davison were elected deacons.

The church invited a council to meet at their usual place of worship to take into consideration the propriety of recognizing their body an independent church on Wednesday, April 29th, 1857. Elder Fuller was voted the solicitor to invite the following churches: Peoria first church, Peoria, Adams street church, Tremont, Metamora,, Washburn, Morton, Richland, Belle Plain and Panola churches. According to appointment the council met on April 29th, and after making all necessary inquiry and

receiving satisfaction unanimously resolved to recognize them as a church with the following exercises: Reading of the scriptures, Elder Whittaker, Tremont church; sermon, Rev. H. G. Weston, Peoria First church; recognition prayer, Rev. C. D. Merrit, Washburn church; right hand of fellowship, Rev. W. M. Brooks, Belle Plain church; charge, Rev. J. Edminster, Peoria Adams street church.

S. R. Davison, J. M. Davison, S. S. Jackman and S. J. Shepler went as delegates to the association held at Brimfield June 10th, 1857.

Elder M. L. Fuller was hired to preach half the time for one year.

March 14th, 1858, five were received into the church by baptism. Elder Fuller tendered his resignation on April 12th, 1858, which was accepted and a call was given to Elder C. D. Merrit, who preached the next Sunday. He said that his church at Washburn could not give him up but that he would come and preach as often as he could. Elder Brooks also preached at times. The services of B. F. Scriven, of New York, were finally secured, he agreeing to preach each alternate Sunday for \$140 per year and commenced his labors on Sunday, July 4th, 1858. Sunday, December 29th, Brother Scriven was ordained as a minister, the churches at Metamora, Belle Plain, Washburn and Richland assisting in the ordination.

On Sunday, January 2nd, 1859, ten persons were received into the church, five by baptism and five by letter and experience, and on January 9th five were received by baptism. January 11th six more were baptized and received. January 23rd two more were baptized.

On March 5th, 1858, Rev. Scriven was hired for another year for \$300 to preach every Sunday.

During the winter of 1858-59 the public school at the Washington school house was taught by P. H. Davison. He had some trouble with some of the larger boys and punished some quite severely which caused quite a feeling in the neigh-

borhood and the trouble was finally, very foolishly, brought into the church. A division sprang up during the summer and several members withdrew from the church, the most of them joining with the Belle Plain Baptist church situated just over the line in Marshall county. The remaining members continued holding services but changed the place of worship from the Washington school house to the Jefferson school house, two miles east.

No church record can be found from the spring of 1859 to the fall of 1869. As near as can be remembered by people now living who were members of the church at that time, Elder B. F. Scrivin continued preaching until the spring of 1860.

The next pastor hired was Elder Hamilton Sampson. It is not known just how long Elder Sampson preached but was probably two years. He had three sons, all of them enlisting in the army and all three died before they had been in the service a year. Shortly after this Elder Sampson quit preaching as the records of the Belle Plain church show that he and his wife put their membership in that church October 26th, 1862.

No more regular services were held during the remainder of the war and for some years after, when a few of the remaining members with the assistance of brethren from Minonk, Belle Plain and other churches assisted by Elder Merrit and Moses Parker commenced a series of meetings December 12th, 1869 which resulted in the conversion of many souls and the resuscitation of the church.

During the succeeding summer the church procured the ministerial services of Elder C. D. Merrit every alternate Sunday. A very interesting Sunday school was also held with John M. Davison as superintendent. During the year 1871 Elder Moses Parker preached half the time, being employed by the Clayton Baptist church the other half. Elder Isaiah Reed preached in 1872 and in 1873 no regular services were held. In 1874 Elder James preached occasionally; in 1875 no regular services. In January 1876 the church procured the services of Elder Charles Sands for regular Sabbath preaching. He preached at

the Belle Plain church in the forenoon and at Meridian church in the afternoon until 1882. During the winter of 1877 a series of meetings were held and much good accomplished and at the close of the meeting thirty-one were baptized, seventeen joining with the Belle Plain church and fourteen with the Meridian church. Regular preaching service and Sabbath school during the remainder of Elder Sands' pastorate, he resigning in 1882. In 1883 Elder A. J. Ammerman was called as pastor for one year. Many of the members moved away from time to time and after Rev. Ammerman's pastorate no regular services were held, although Sunday school was kept up with the exception of a few years and preaching a part of the time by ministers from Minonk and Benson. On January 26th, 1888, a special meeting was held at the residence of Elder Sands, who still continued to live in the neighborhood, and A. H. Parks, the church clerk, was authorized to grant letters to all worthy members and the church disbanded.

During the spring of 1893 the Sunday school was again organized, the attendance being good, it was decided to invite Rev. H. D. Morwood, who was pastor of the Benson Baptist church at that time, to hold preaching services. In October of the same year a series of revival meetings were held which resulted in the conversion and baptism of eleven persons, some of them uniting with the Minonk church and the balance with the Benson church. Rev. Morwood resigned in May 1898. Since that time the following pastors of the Benson Baptist church have continued the preaching service every Sunday afternoon. Sunday school has also been regularly held. Rev. W. L. Jones from November 5th, 1898 to August 27th, 1899, Rev. J. S. Marple from October 1st, 1899 to October 1st, 1900, Rev. George N. Spencer from October 30th, 1900 to May 25th, 1902, Rev. F. N. Johnson from August 31st, 1902 to the spring of 1906, Rev. Edgar Ford from March 28th, 1906 to February 24th, 1907, Rev. E. E. Kraus from June 9th, 1907 to August 29th, 1909, Rev. Harry Weddington from October 24th, 1909 to October

1st, 1910, Rev. W. E. Tharp from December 20th, 1911 to —.

During Elder Johnson's pastorate a meeting was called to consider the re-organization of the church but it was decided to become a mission of the Benson Baptist church. Although not an independent organized church, regular preaching service and Sunday school are now held with very good attendance.

The present superintendent, Victor Davison, was elected to that office when he was sixteen years old so the old Meridian church is among the oldest in years of service and has the youngest Sunday school superintendent of any Baptist church in the county.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Minonk Baptist Church.

THE Minonk Baptist church was organized June 6th, 1858, consisting of fifteen charter members. A. H. Danforth was chosen the first clerk and was the only one left of the original members at the fiftieth anniversary. Acting on the invitation of the members, a council was convened for the purpose of examining the members in regard to church doctrines and articles of faith. Having found that they were orthodox, it was recognized as an independent church. The pastors present were Rev. G. S. Baily, Metamora; Rev. F. Ketchem, Panola; Rev. C. D. Merrit, Washburn; and the Richland church was represented by Elder M. L. Fuller. The church was officially recognized on June 20th, 1858. The services were held in the East Side school building until the church was built. On July 30th, 1859, having been without a pastor for 13 months, a call was extended to Rev. C. D. Merrit. At this time Berry Hall had succeeded A. H. Danforth as clerk. He was to collect \$11.00 to pay for a lot upon which to build a church. We must remember that lots at that time were on the open prairie. In March 1860 the church voted to allow Rev. C. D. Merrit to preach half time at the Belle Plain church.

Many from this organization being enlisted in the army, they still kept in touch with the church by writing letters and receiving letters from the members. Having been without a church building for six years, they decided to build. The church having been completed it was dedicated October 30th, 1864. The building committee consisted of Rev. C. D. Merrit, D. P. Kenyon, J. P. Danforth, S. D. and M. A. Cushing. The cost of the building, completed was \$3,691. The dedication taking place a bright, clear Sunday. The building was considered a fine structure for that time. The original church went thru many changes and still to the older members it was still the old church. A man by the name of Baily was the builder, he being assisted much by volunteer work by some of the members. Sometime, we do not know just when, a Baptist church situated seven miles west, came and united with the Minonk church. In the year 1873, the original church being small to house the congregation, it was decided to build an addition of 16 feet to the north end of the structure. The membership was then 200. The following men were appointed a committee to raise funds and to superintend the work: Rev. C. D. Merrit, J. A. Simpson and A. H. Danforth. In July the contract was let to S. A. Baily for \$850, the total expense being \$968.90. For a period of a few years the church enjoyed great prosperity, receiving many new members and good work was done.

On Sunday morning, January 30, after having served the church for nearly seventeen years as its pastor, Rev. C. D. Merrit informed his congregation that it was his wish to resign his labors as pastor, the same to take effect in February. The church still wishing to retain him as pastor decided not to accept his resignation so that he continued as pastor. But in the following year he again offered his resignation, saying that he would be obliged to leave on account of his wife's health. They accepted his resignation and drafted resolutions in regard to the Christian fellowship of pastor and church.

After a month's deliberation and consideration, on March

4th, 1887, a call was extended to Rev. George Sutherland to become pastor and he remained with the church until April 5th, 1879. The next pastor was A. J. Caldwell, extending from June 1st, 1880 to May 16th, 1881. Rev. J. J. Shipp was the next pastor. He closed his labors on August 24th, 1882. One event of his pastorate was his marriage to Miss Gertrade Miller in the church at an evening service. The next pastor was Rev. Minch, who held the pastorate from October 8th, 1882 to January 20th, 1884. For a short time the church was supplied by Rev. S. B. Rundler. A little later a call was extended to Elder Coffman and after him came Rev. Burnham. Until this time the church had no parsonage, the pastor living wherever he could get a house. Brother Burnham started the move to build a parsonage. A building committee was appointed, the cost not to exceed \$800. Brother Burnham resigned soon after its completion and Brother Shipp took up the work, remaining three years. In 1891 the whole design of the church was changed, the total cost was \$1324. In July 1892 Brother Shipp resigned and was followed by Rev. Swift. While Brother Swift was there he was ordained. Rev. Wiley commenced his labors in June 1892 and remained four years. Rev. Moon followed and after him came Rev. Wallace, who commenced his labors in July 1900. About this time the church began to think about erecting a new building. Mrs. S. M. Parks died in December 1902, and in her will she set aside \$2000 as a nucleus for a new church. While this was a good start, had not the minister, Rev. Wallace, and the trustees urged and planned for a new building it is doubtful whether anything would have been done. Rev. Wallace resigned in June 1906, having worked hard for a new church and having constantly kept the new church project before the congregation. After him came Rev. McCormick, who led the people thru the trying period of erecting a new house of worship. The old church building was torn down July 1907 and the same month ground was broken for the new church. In November 1907 the corner stone was laid with due ceremony, and the

building continued all winter. The church services were held in the Woodman hall and in the German Baptist church during the period of the erection of the new building. The dedication service began at 10 a. m., January 3rd, 1909, presided over by Rev. Wallace, a former pastor, the protestant churches and pastors taking part in the exercises. The dedication sermon was delivered by Rev. J. B. Thomas, of Chicago.

Brother Baker, of Walnut, became pastor on January 24th, 1909, and a council was called to ordain him. It convened for that purpose on June 22nd, 1909. The council was organized by electing Brother Wallace, of Utica, moderator, and Brother Barnet, of Clinton, clerk. Sixteen delegates were present, representing eight churches. The ordination sermon was delivered by Rev. Baker, the ordination prayer by Rev. Straus, of Benson; charge to candidate Rev. Fuller, of El Paso; charge to church, Rev. Shipp, Graymont; benediction by the candidate. Rev. Baker served the church until November 7th, 1909, when a call was extended to Rev. W. H. Trolliver, of Indiana, to become its pastor. He closed his work there April 1st, 1912. On August 1st, 1912, Rev. J. C. Oranger took charge of the church as its pastor. The officers are as follows: Trustees, A. H. Parks, Tom Pickard, Heddo Vosberg, R. H. Parks, W. S. Morrison, C. E. Ridge and Otto Ravnehorst; deacons, James Ridge, H. P. Parks, Jacob McChesney, William Hohlen and Joseph Pickard. Present membership 214.

CHAPTER IX.

The Clayton Baptist Church.



THE Clayton Baptist church was organized at the home of Deacon Huxtable about 1862, by Rev. M. L. Fuller, one of the pioneer Baptist preachers of Illinois, assisted by Rev. Sampson and Rev. Hedlock. The meetings were held in the home of Deacon Huxtable until the building of the church in 1866. The dedication took

place under the pastorate of Elder William Parker, who served as pastor for three years. He was followed by George Reed, who remained pastor four years. He was followed by Elder Regan, who served as pastor the next year. Rev. A. L. Colby was pastor two years. During the time intervening before the calling of Brother G. E. Dye, in May 1879, the church was supplied by different preachers, having no settled pastor. Brother G. E. Dye was ordained while pastor and remained with the church until October 1880. Elder Ammerman served the church as pastor until the church called Elder Samuel Breakwell in June 1883. The next pastor was Rev. I. C. Hall, who closed his labors when the church called Brother L. R. Banks on March 21st, 1885. He was ordained at Benson November 12th, 1885, resigning June 27th, 1886. On March 12th, 1887, Brother Neyman was called as pastor and ordained at Benson May 19th, 1887. This closes the connection between the Benson and the Clayton churches as one church and on February 17th, 1888, a new organization was formed from members of the Clayton church, to be known as the Benson Baptist church.

The Benson Baptist Church.

THERE was a Sunday school organized in Benson in Coleman's hall, April 26th, 1874. Dr. D. W. Siemens was chosen superintendent. This continued in connection with the Clayton Baptist church from 1874 to 1883. August 19th, 1882, a council was called to organize a separate church, the same to be known as the Benson Baptist church. Rev. A. J. Ammerman moderator and John Fry, secretary. It was decided to solicit funds for a church. B. F. Zinser, D. Davis and Samuel Peterson were chosen a building committee. John Fry, D. Davis and Joseph Tallyn were chosen trustees. The property known as the Matthew Kolb property was bought as a site for the church. The building being completed it was dedicated July 22nd, 1883, free from debt, costing about \$2300.

On the 25th day of March, 1888, the church was finally organized as a separate church, having been up to that time, connected with the Clayton church. The following 27 persons had been granted letters from the Clayton church on February 27th, 1888, to organize the Benson Baptist church: D. Davis, John Fry, Joseph Tallyn, Sarah Tallyn, Charles Tallyn, B. F. Zinser, Marcia Davis, A. L. Fry, S. W. Woltzen, May B. Fry, Susana Fry, Susana Lee, Newton O. Tallyn, Irene Tallyn, Lizzie Fry, Amelia Fry, Carrie S. Tallyn, Lottie Lee, F. N. Tallyn, E. W. Tallyn, A. H. Tallyn, Ella F. Tallyn, Alice A. Tallyn, Emma Smilie, Lizzie Kindig and Hannah Parks.

At a meeting held at Benson March 2nd, 1888, with E. C. Cady acting as moderator and D. Davis as secretary, it was organized as a separate church, and at the same meeting B. F. Zinser, John Fry and Joseph Tallyn were elected deacons and Joseph Tallyn, John Fry and D. Davis trustees. During the year 1889 Rev. Gunther served the church part of the time. November 8th, 1871, Brother F. A. Gregory held a series of meetings that continued until November 19th, 1891, and did much good. On July 9th, 1890, Rev. Morewood was chosen to supply the church for a while. The next pastor was Rev. W. L. Jones, who began his labors November 28th, 1891. He acted as pastor until August 27th, 1899. Rev. J. S. Marple became pastor October 1st, 1899. He held a series of meetings resulting in much good. He served as pastor until August 28th, 1900. Rev. Spencer began his labor as pastor December 9th, 1900, and remained until May 25th, 1902. Rev. F. M. Johnson was called August 31st, 1902. About January 25th, 1903, a series of meetings was begun, he being assisted by Rev. Fuller, of El Paso, and Dr. Simmons, of Peoria. Brother Ford was supplying the church about May 2nd, 1905. Brother J. B. Brown supplied the church a short time in 1907. After having been supplied by several preachers, a call was extended to Brother Krause, who commenced on the 15th of August, 1907. Brother J. M. Wood assisted him to hold a meeting in the fall

of 1908. Elder Krause served as pastor until August 20th, 1909. Brother H. Weddington became pastor in the fall of 1909. Rev. Tharp received a call December 20th, 1911, and is still pastor. The officers at present are: Pastor, Rev. M. Elmore Tharp; deacons, A. H. Tallyn, George Nellinger, F. C. Tucker; trustees, C. A. Tallyn, Paul H. Davison, E. M. Tallyn; treasurer, F. C. Tucker; clerk, Alpha M. Tallyn. Present membership 85.

CHAPTER X.

The Roanoke Baptist Church.

AT a regular covenant meeting of the Richland Baptist church on April 12th, 1865, letters of dismissal were asked for by thirty of its members to form a new church on the prairie to be known as the Roanoke Baptist church, and, after due deliberation, were granted to the following members: E. A. Fisher, Amelia Fisher, Thomas Marshall, Martha Marshall, M. L. Fuller, Jr., Anna Fuller, Elder M. L. Fuller, Albert H. Fuller, Elvira B. Fuller, Myron A. Fuller, Stillman Fuller, George B. Fuller, Milo E. Fuller, Elijah R. Marshall, Martha S. Marshall, Cyrus R. Marshall, Elvira Marshall, Virginia Lamb, James Hewitt, Martha Hewitt, Rosina Terry, Josiah Rogers, Miranda M. Arnold, Samuel Butterfield, Mary Butterfield, Charles Avery, Angelina Hall, Georgia Smith, William Lamb.

On June 5th, a council was held for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church composed of the names just given. They met at the school house four miles northeast of Metamora, the following churches sending delegates: Metamora, Elder Graham and P. A. Coen; Richland, Deacon Hammers and Abner Mundell; Washburn, Elder S. S. Robinson, and Elder Vaugan of Lacon, being present was invited to sit in council with them. Elder Graham was chosen moderator and P. A. Coen clerk. After hearing the request to organize a Baptist

church, and being convinced that they were able to sustain a church, the council voted to proceed with the organization exercises as follows: Reading of the scriptures, Rev. S. S. Robinson; prayer, P. A. Coen; sermon, Elder Vaugan; recognition prayer, Elder S. S. Robinson; address to the church and hand of fellowship, Elder Ira Graham; P. A. Coen, clerk. E. A. Fisher was elected the first deacon and held the office until he moved to Kansas, and Myron Fuller was the first clerk. On June 13th, 1865, the following brethren were chosen as trustees, E. A. Fisher, E. R. Marshall and M. L. Fuller, Jr. March 31st, 1866, Elder S. S. Robinson became pastor half time, and in January of the following year the church secured his services full time. He continued as pastor until March 1st, 1869. On September 12th, 1865, the church was received into the Illinois River Baptist Association, meeting that year with the El Paso church. On June 13th, 1865, at a meeting held at the school house near Elder M. L. Fuller's, it was decided to build a church one mile south and one mile west, the church being built by Smith, a contractor from Washington. It was dedicated August 22nd, 1866, the following brethren taking part: Scripture reading, Elder M. L. Fuller; sermon, Rev. C. D. Merrit; prayer, Rev. S. S. Robinson, pastor. On March 21st, 1869, a call was extended to Elder W. E. James to become pastor, he to preach one half time, which was accepted. He continued to serve as pastor until November 29th, 1870. Elder J. W. Berry was the next pastor, serving the church one half time, dividing with Metamora, from Nov. 19th, 1870, until Nov. 1st, 1872. On May 3rd, the church called Brother I. W. Read to become its pastor and on the 15th of May the church met for the purpose of arranging for the ordination of Brother I. W. Read and to call a council of the following churches: Richland, Washburn, Belle Plain, Meridian, Minonk, Clayton, Panola and Metamora and the following brethren, Elder Wm. Parker, S. S. Robinson, J. M. Berry, M. L. Fuller and F. Ketchem.

June 19th, 1872, in accordance with the call of the

church for the ordaining of Brother I. W. Read to the gospel ministry, the following churches sent delegates: Richland, Belle Plain, Minonk, Clayton and El Paso, also M. L. Fuller, of Peoria county, and Elder Wm. Parker, of Richland. The meeting was called to order by Elder C. D. Merrit, and Rev. M. L. Fuller was chosen moderator and Brother James A. Hammers as clerk. After hearing his Christian experience and his call to the ministry and finding him sound in doctrine, the ordination exercises were as follows: Sermon, Elder C. D. Merrit; prayer, Elder M. L. Fuller; charge to candidate, Elder J. W. James; charge to the church, Elder William Parker; hand of fellowship, Elder G. W. Read, brother of the candidate. On November 9th, a call of the Fairbury church was received for delegates to participate in the ordination of Brother J. C. Read, a brother of I. W. Read. The following brethren were appointed: Brother M. L. Fuller, Jr. and Deacon E. A. Fisher. Elder Read continued to serve as pastor there until the summer of 1874 and on December 10th, 1874 the Roanoke Baptist church decided to call a council for the purpose of setting apart Brother J. C. H. Read, a brother of I. W. Read, to the gospel ministry. The following churches were invited to send delegates: Belle Plain, Clayton, Washington, Washburn and Cazenovia, and Rev. W. Parker. The council convened by electing W. E. James as moderator and Joseph Plank, clerk. Having examined him in regard to church doctrine and finding him satisfactory the ordination proceeded as follows: Ordination sermon and prayer, Elder W. E. James; charge to candidate and right hand of fellowship, Elder W. Parker; charge to the church, Elder A. B. Tomlinson. Elder J. C. H. Read served as pastor of the Roanoke church from about June 26th, 1875 to February 5th, 1876. On May 27th, 1876 a call was extended to Rev. David Fielding to become pastor for one year but owing to failing health he was compelled to resign July 22nd, 1876. After Brother Fielding the church again secured Rev. J. C. H. Read, he served as pastor from September 16th, 1876 until June 21st,

1877. April 5th, 1876 a call was extended to Brother Wood, a student at Morgan Park, to serve six months and on December 31st, 1879, Deacon Fisher reported that he had secured Brother Wood to preach every Sunday afternoon for \$3.00 a Sunday. Brother A. H. Wilson commenced his labors as pastor August 21st, 1880, preaching every Sunday afternoon until January 21st, 1882. A call was extended to Brother J. J. Gorham to preach every two weeks in the afternoon until April 1st. On November 9th, 1879, Brother M. L. Fuller, Jr., and A. F. Marshall were sent as delegates to the ordination of Brother George E. Dye, of the Clayton Baptist church.

At a meeting of the church held on the fifth day of August, 1882, the following brethren, Deacon E. A. Fisher and A. F. Marshall were chosen to sit in council with the Baptist church at Washburn for the purpose of ordaining Elder J. J. Gorham to the gospel ministry. The church having been without a pastor for some time a call was extended to Elder J. W. Coffman for one year. He remained until January 4th, 1884, and on November 5th, 1885, the church extended a call to Brother A. Gregory to become pastor, and on January 17th, 1886, at a meeting of the church Deacon E. A. Fisher and Brother A. F. Marshall were appointed as delegates to sit in council called by the Cazenovia Baptist church to ordain Rev. A. Gregory to the gospel ministry. He served the church as pastor until September 1887. At a covenant and business meeting, the pastor and two brethren were appointed to sit in council at the Clayton Baptist church to ordain Brother J. W. Neyman to the gospel ministry. Deacon E. A. Fisher and Brother W. H. Peard were appointed as such committee. On September 25th, 1887, the church called Brother M. M. Lewis to preach every Sunday morning. He served as pastor until September 1889. On the 12th day of October 1889, Brother Booth, a student of Chicago University, became pastor. He remained two years. After the resignation of Brother T. W. Booth, Elder Young supplied the church for a while and about March 12th, 1892, Elder E. C.

Cady commenced to preach. Just how long he remained the records do not show. On October 8th, 1892, the church sent as delegates, Deacon J. T. Peard and wife, to sit in council at Minonk to ordain Brother Fuller Swift to the gospel ministry.

In October 1892, perhaps one of the greatest events in the history of the Roanoke Baptist church was the farewell for Brother and Sister Young, just before their departure for the foreign field. It was certainly a red letter day for the Roanoke Baptist church. The following pastors took part in the exercises: Brother J. W. Tanner, of Normal; Rev. W. B. Riley, of Bloomington, and Rev. Fuller Swift, of Minonk. At the close of the exercises Sister Young was baptized, she having formerly been a member of the Presbyterian church.

On October 14th, 1893, Elder Herrick commenced his labors as pastor, serving until November 10th, 1894, when the church called Brother Anderson to preach every other Sunday during the school year, while he was attending Chicago University, and every Sunday during the vacation. Elder J. F. Sparks was the last pastor, commencing his labors November 9th, 1895, and remaining for two years. The church was sold during the year 1904 for \$300 to the Mennonites and the money turned over to the Bloomington Baptist Association.

CHAPTER XI.

The German Baptist Church of Minonk.

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THE German Baptist church of Minonk was started as a Mission of the German Baptist church of Peoria, and was continued as such until 1867, a church building having been erected the year before (1866). In the summer of 1867 it was decided to organize a church consisting of 13 members as follows:—Rev. Fredrich Melchert and wife; John Aggrerle and wife; Fredrich Rocho and wife; John H. Memmen and wife; G. J. Pielstick and wife; Henry Fulse and wife; Aaron Memmen. A Sunday school was maintained throughout the life of the church, Superintendent,

John T. Jochums. G. J. Pielstick was the first clerk. No Deacon was elected for 15 years, the pastor filling all the offices. The first Deacons elected were William Holman and Fredrick Melchert Jr. who served for many years.

The first pastor was Rev. Frederick Melchert who served for 13 years. After Rev. Melchert came Rev. Fellman who served for 1½ years, The next pastor was Rev. F. Hoffman, remaining 3 years. Rev. G. A. Geunther then took up the work and remained as pastor 4 years. Rev. Wm. Pfeiffer came as the next pastor, remaining 3 years and was followed by Rev. H. Bens who served 3 years. The next pastor was Rev. Albert Hinz who remained 4 years. After him came Rev. D. Zwink who served 1 year and 9 months and he was followed by Rev. G. E. Lohr who remained 3 years, and after this pastor Rev. H. Bens filled the pulpit again for a short time. The last pastor was Rev. Schroeder, how long he served the records do not show.

In order to make a deed to the property a meeting was called November 18th, 1910, of all the church members left, and proceeded by electing Rev. J. Meis chairman, and H. Vosberg, John Funk and John T. Jochums trustees and Miss Meta Garrels, clerk. It was voted unanimously to deed all the church property in Minonk to the German Missionary society of the German Baptist church of North America. This closes the history of the only German Baptist church in Woodford county.

CHAPTER XII.

NEIGHBORING CHURCHES.

WHILE the Deer Creek and Belle Plain churches are not located in Woodford county, they are situated on the border of the county and drew a large share of their membership from this side of the county line, and it is therefore deemed appropriate that their history should be included in this volume.

Deer Creek Church.

On January 2nd, 1868, at the home of B. C. Allen, seventeen persons, members of the Baptist church living south of Washington met and considered the propriety of organizing a Baptist church. At this meeting it was decided that if twenty could be found they would organize a church to be known as the Deer Creek Baptist church. They adjourned to meet at the home of Christopher Shaffer January 22nd. At the meeting at Brother Shaffer's a church was organized, electing A. J. Ammerman moderator and J. D. McNutt secretary. The church consisted of thirty-five members coming from the church of Washington and other churches. At this meeting the following were elected deacons: Christopher Shaffer, William Lockwood, William Huxtable and B. C. Allen. Mr. Allen was elected clerk. On the same day at the same house the church was organized, Peter Vance being chosen moderator, T. C. Brown clerk, Rev. Pope, of Peoria, preaching the sermon. February 22nd, Rev. A. J. Ammerman was called to serve the church one half time and from May 20th to serve the church full time. During all this time the organization had met all the time at the homes of the brethren. On February 22nd they voted to build a church to be located on a half acre leased from the farm of William Huxtable. The church was erected and used to worship in until the spring of 1889, when it was moved to Deer Creek.

May 29th, 1875, the church called George Sutherland to serve four months and he was ordained June 22nd, 1876, Rev. T. Campbell preaching the sermon. April 21st, 1887, a call was extended to Rev. W. E. James for six months for half time and later for full time. His ministry closed October 1877. September 8th, 1878, a call was extended to Rev. H. A. Nixon to supply for the fall and winter and on March 9th, 1879 he was called to serve the church regularly. He was ordained June 8th, 1879, and served as pastor until February 1884. May 31st, 1885, Rev. J. E. Thomas became pastor of the Deer Creek and Washington churches. This pastorate seems to have closed

on September 7th, 1887. Rev. Charles Eye served as pastor from August 27th, 1887 until April 27th, 1889. The next pastor was E. O. Lovett who served from April 5th, 1890 to February 1891. Rev. C. Hemmenway served the church from April 19th, 1891 to October 24th, 1891. Rev. E. K. Reynolds was the next pastor, beginning his labors January 30th, 1892. He was ordained April 16th of that year and closed his labors November 3rd, 1894. Rev. R. Willoughford was pastor from January 5th, 1895 to January 1897. May 26th, 1897 Rev. S. F. Whitcomb began as pastor, closing his work in June 1898. On November 29th, 1898 J. H. Baker commenced as pastor, closing his work in that field October 5th, 1901. Rev. Benj. Spencer supplied the church as pastor for a while about November 30th, 1901. December 1902 Rev. Smith became pastor, closing August 6th, 1905. Rev. J. D. Crumley began his labor June 19th, 1906 and is still pastor.

The Goodfield church was erected in 1891 and the pastor who served the Deer Creek church since that time has preached at Goodfield every alternate Sabbath.

The church officers at the present time are: J. D. Crumley, pastor; H. R. Nixon, clerk; J. M. Cornwell, treasurer; S. C. Nixon, J. S. Nixon, R. M. Lockwood, W. H. Marshall, W. S. Smith, deacons; H. M. Robinson, O. P. Mitchell, W. H. Marshall, J. S. Nixon, J. C. Culbertson, trustees.

Belle Plain Baptist Church.

We whose names are hereunder signed having, this 26th day of February, 1852, met together for the purpose of organizing ourselves as a Church at Belle Plain, Marshall county, Illinois, do adopt the following church covenant.

As we trust, we have been brought by Divine Grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the influence of His spirit to give ourselves up to Him, so we do now solemnly covenant with each other, that, God enabling us, we will walk to-

gether in brotherly love; that we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, rebuke and admonish one another as the case may require; that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together nor omit the great duty of prayer, both for ourselves and for others; that we will participate in each others joys, and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy, to bear each others burdens and sorrows; that we will earnestly endeavor to bring up such as might be under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that we will seek Divine aid to enable us to walk circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying ungodliness and every worldly lust; that we will strive together for the support of the faithful evangelized ministry among us; that we will endeavor, by example and effect, to win souls to Christ; and, through life, amidst evil report and good report, seek to live to the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

William Brooks	Nancy Loyd	Elizabeth Davison
R. W. Rains	James P. Lucas	Amos West
Susan P. Rains	Chas. H. Davison	Nancy West
Nancy McCalla	John P. Davison	

The meetings were held in the Belle Plain school house and the fourth Saturday in March 1852 it was decided to meet the second Saturday in each month at 3 o'clock p. m. R. W. Rains was elected moderator and J. P. Lucas, clerk.

July 16th, 1852, a number of the brethren met together to take into consideration the propriety of setting apart, A. William Brooks to the work of the gospel ministry. The following delegates were in attendance from other churches: Steuben, Elder W. G. Gordon; Spring Bay, Elder E. S. Freeman; Chillicothe, Elder C. D. Merit; Half Moon, Brother S. Carton; Stamping Ground, Kentucky, Brother S. Lucas. After due deliberation it was decided to proceed with the ordination exercises which were as follows: Sermon, Elder C. D. Merit, 2d Cor. 3-6; prayer, Elder E. S. Freeman; charge, El-

der W. G. Gordon; charge to church, Elder C. D. Merit. The second Saturday in January, 1853, A. C. West was appointed deacon. Regular meetings were now held with Elder Brooks as pastor. Thomas C. Spencer was elected treasurer in October 1854. At a meeting held June 2nd, 1855, Thomas Richardson, A. C. Lucas and J. P. Lucas was appointed trustees. A committee consisting of William Brooks, T. Spencer and J. P. Lucas were appointed to raise money to build a meeting house and E. Tharp, G. Bocock and G. Holman a committee to look up a location for the building. December 15th, 1855, T. C. Spencer was elected clerk in place of J. P. Lucas and Abe Frye was elected treasurer.

January 26th, 1856, a special meeting was held to decide on a location for building a church. Two locations were presented, one near the Hazelwood school house and one in the grove on Crow Creek near Thomas Bennington's. The latter place was chosen the ground being donated by A. J. Frye for the purpose. On May 31st a meeting was held to reconsider the vote taken on January 26th to build a meeting house on the lot of A. J. Frye. Three sites for a meeting house were then presented. One near the Hazelwood school house, one near the residence of Brother Wineteer and one in the grove on Brother Fry's land. On motion the one near the Hazelwood school house was selected. A new committee of five, consisting of W. A. Brooks, J. E. P. Bell, A. J. Frye, T. C. Spencer and John Wineteer were appointed to raise funds for the purpose of building a meeting house. October 18th, 1856, the building committee recommended that the church build a house 50 feet long, 36 feet wide and 16 feet to the eaves. A building committee consisting of W. A. Brooks, T. C. Spencer, J. E. P. Bell, John Wineteer and Harrison Simpson was appointed. November 15th, 1856, Deacon A. C. West resigned his office as deacon on account of delicate health and Harrison Simpson was appointed. December 20th, 1856, J. E. P. Bell was elected treasurer in place of A. J. Frye. December 11th,

1858, the pastor, together with H. Simpson, John Wineteer and J. E. P. Bell were sent as a committee to assist in the ordination of B. F. Scrivin at the Meridian church. On January 8th, 1859, a committee consisting of the pastor, A. C. West, F. C. Simpson and J. E. P. Bell were sent to meet with other churches, meeting to be held six miles northwest of Panola, and if thought proper, to assist in recognizing them as a Baptist church.

April 17th, 1859, the church received a communication from the Meridian Baptist church asking it to join with them in calling an ecclesiastical council to settle some difficulty in their church. The request was denied and on April 30th, a second communication was received and request was again denied. August 20th, a letter from Elder B. F. Scrivin, pastor of the Meridian church, was received saying that a council is invited to meet with the Meridian church at Jefferson school house on August 24th.

Also received a communication from Elder G. S. Baily, asking us to take action in regard to forming a new association to be composed of the churches of the Illinois River Association on the east side of the river. Vote taken by ballot and resulted in 27 for and one against a new association.

August 21st, 1859, Elder Brooks resigned as pastor, having served since his ordination in 1852. September 17th, 1859, Elder W. M. Brooks, H. Simpson, J. E. P. Bell and T. C. Spencer were appointed as messengers to go to Metamora on the 21st, to meet with the messengers from the several churches for the purpose of organizing a new association on the east side of the Illinois river.

February 4th, 1860, the church voted to elect another deacon. S. R. Davison was elected. February 23rd, a call was extended to L. L. Martin as pastor.

March 23rd, 1860, the following churches were invited to sit in an ecclesiastical council to examine Brother E. D. Davison's qualifications as a candidate for the ministry and if thought best to ordain him. Said meeting to be held at our place of worship, on the 15th day of March: Tonica, Panola, Metamora, Richland

Valley, Rutland, Clayton, Richland, Lacon, Minonk, Meridian, Washburn. March 15th, the council convened with the following churches represented: Rutland, Belle Plain, Minonk, Meridian, Washburn and Richland Valley. Motion was made that in view of the small number in attendance that we adjourn till March 28th. On that date the council convened with the following churches represented: Tonica, Rutland, Minonk, Meridian, Clayton, Washburn and Belle Plain. Brother E. D. Davison was called upon and said under the circumstances he would rather withdraw his application if agreeable to the feelings of the church and council. On motion his request was granted.

March 22nd, 1860 Elder Martin declined to accept the call extended and April 28th, Elder C. D. Merrit was elected pastor.

August 22nd, 1860, voted to build a church 30 feet by 44 feet and 16 feet high to the eaves. A building committee was appointed consisting of C. D. Merit, S. R. Davidson, H. Simpson, R. M. Smilie and J. E. P. Bell. September 1st, 1860, the building committee was invested with power to decide where the church should be located and in September the committee reported that they had bought a lot in the grove of about two acres. Four new trustees were elected as follows: J. E. P. Bell, S. R. Davison, John Wineteer and H. Simpson. November 9th, 1861, a committee was appointed to raise money and buy more ground to be used as a burying ground. February 15th, 1862, the building committee reported that they had collected from all sources for the erection of the meeting house the sum of \$1331.70, that they had paid out for building said house and the purchase of land on which it stands the sum of \$1332.36.

Elder Merrit resigned October 18th, 1864, having served four and one-half years as pastor. February 25th, 1865 Elder J. Cairns was extended a call but declined and on June 17th, Elder H. M. Danforth accepted a call to preach one half the time. Elder Danforth preached one year and on June 16th, 1866, the church voted to invite Brother E. D. Davison to preach one half the time and extended a call to Elder C. Cross to preach

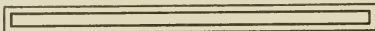
the other half. Elder Cross preached but one year when a call was extended to Brother Nailor who preached from June 15th, 1867 to November 30th, of the same year, when he resigned. March 1st, 1868, Elder Parker was elected pastor. He preached for two years. On April 21st, 1869, Louis Wineteer and L. Fisher were ordained as deacons. April 16th, 1870, Elder Benton was hired as pastor for six months for \$200, and on Feb. 11th, 1871, Elder James was hired to preach one fourth the time for one year. At the end of the year he was hired to preach for full time and continued as pastor till October 1875 when a call was extended to Rev. Charles Sands who preached one half the time and at the Meridian church the other half. Elder Sands acted as pastor of the two churches for about seven and one-half years. During the month of February, 1877, a series of revival meetings were held which resulted in the conversion of twenty-nine persons, seventeen of them uniting with the Belle Plain church and twelve with the Meridian church. Several more were received by experience. Elder Sands resigned in the spring of 1883 and in August of the same year Elder A. J. Ammerman took up the pastorate for one year after which no regular services were held.

In 1885 a meeting was held and it was decided that Elder Sands, who still lived in the neighborhood, be authorized to issue letters of commendation to those asking for same, where he had good reason to believe them worthy, and the church disbanded.

In 1887 an informal meeting was held with Baptist brethren and sisters of other churches interested, for the purpose of consulting the propriety of repairing the church and organizing for church work. James M. Davison of Meridian church and Lee Goodell of Washburn church were appointed as a committee to solicit subscriptions. On January 28th, 1888, the committee reported that repairs were made and paid for and had hired J. Q. Berry as pastor. February 28th, 1888 J. J. Faw, Louis Wineteer and James M. Davison were elected trus-

tees. In October 1888, Brother Berry resigned and Brother Brisley was elected pastor who preached till May 1889 when Brother P. H. Falk was hired as pastor for one year. At the expiration of the year he agreed to still continue as pastor if the church would agree to pay his expenses from Morgan Park and return each alternate Sunday and pay him a Salary of \$300 per year. An effort was made to collect the amount necessary but there being so few Baptists left in the neighborhood it was finally decided to discontinue preaching services.

The old church still stands in the grove, about eighty rods west of the old Belle Plain postoffice, but is very badly in need of repair, as no church services of any kind have been held there since the preaching of Elder Falk in 1890.



Conclusion.

FROM the foregoing history, the reader may draw the conclusion that the strength of the Baptist churches in Woodford county, is on the decline, but it is merely a repetition of the experiences of other denominations that flourished in the early days of the county's development. Members have moved away, settling in new regions, and their places have been taken by those affiliated with other organizations. It is a condition due to the shifting of the population of the county, and it is by no means indicative of a loss of interest in the Baptist church, the scenes of the activity of its members have simply changed to other regions. The Baptist organizations that still exist in this county, are churches of wide influence and great helpfulness. Thru their consecrated ministry the cause of Christ has been made dear to many a heart, and great numbers can look back in memory to the first steps in Christian life, as taken in the Baptist church. The field of usefulness has not been limited to the boundaries of Woodford county, but the leaven of Christian teaching, as received in the various Baptist churches of the county has been carried into many widely separate parts of the earth, carrying with it the sunshine and the love of Christ into many homes that would have otherwise been dark and cheerless.

In the preceding pages I have presented as concisely as possible the history of our church in this county, but its full history will only be revealed when the record of the lives touched by its benign influence is brought to light in the Realm of God.

THE END.

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